Dr. *MANNYNGHAM's*

SERMON

Preach'd before

Her Majesty,

AT

WHITE-HALL,

February the 28*th*. 169$\frac{3}{4}$.

A

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ON THE

Sincerity and Integrity of the Heart.

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February the 28*th.* $169\frac{3}{4}$.

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and Rector of St. *Andrew-Holborn.*

Publish'd by Her Majesty's Special Command.

LONDON:

Printed for *S. Smith*, and *B. Walford*, at the *Princes-Armes*, in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1694.

PSALM CXXXIX. 23. 24.

Search me, O God, and know my Heart: Try me, and know my Thoughts:

And ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlaſting.

THIS Pſalm is ſuppoſed to have been made by *David*, when he was under the *Perſecution* of *Saul*, when his Enemies accus'd him of *Wicked Deſigns* againſt the Government, and laid many things to his charge, of which he knew himſelf to be no ways guilty.

This put him upon the *Juſtification* of himſelf, and the clearing of his Innocency betwixt God and his own Soul; which he perform-

performed in a very ſolemn and deliberate manner, by appealing to the *Omniſcience* of God, when he had with much exactneſs, and a peculiar elegancy deſcrib'd *it* in the former part of this Pſalm. For here he acknowledges the *Spiritual Nature* of God, whereby he is preſent to all the Thoughts of our Minds, to all the Deſires of our Hearts, to the moſt ſecret Deſigns, and hidden Counſels of the Soul: That there is no getting out of his Preſence, no concealing any thing from his Knowledge; that there is no Night, no Darkneſs with reſpect to Him; but that all things are in a full Light and Manifeſtation to his All-ſeeing Eye.

Now, when he had declar'd what juſt Apprehenſions he had of the *Divine Nature*; and how clearly he was convinc'd, That there was no Thought of his Mind, no Word of his Mouth, no Inclination of his Heart, but what was perfectly known to that *Infinite Spirit*, who gave him his Soul, and fram'd all the Parts of his Body, who

who knew his down-ſitting and his up-riſing; who was about his Paths and about his Bed, and was acquainted with all his ways: when he had wrought ſuch a full Conviction and Awe in his Soul, of the *Infinite Knowledge* and *Preſence* of the Divine Power; then he deliver'd himſelf up to the Trial and Examination of that All-knowing Spirit; deſiring, that he would ſearch to the very bottom of his Heart, diſcover all the Foundations of his Soul, and ſee if there were *any wicked way* in him, any evil Purpoſe or Deſign, any miſchievous Imagination, of which his Enemies accus'd him: And if he found that he was innocent and clear, that he would ſtill protect and aſſiſt him under that *Integrity* of his Heart, of which he was ſo greatly Conſcious to himſelf; that he would lead him in that Path of *Uprightneſs* and *ſincere Piety*, which would be ſure to bring him at length to *Everlaſting* Life.

Now, tho' this ſolemn *Appeal* to God, which *David* made in this Pſalm, may ſeem

ſeem to concern his *Innocence*, only in reſpect to thoſe *particular Crimes* which were then objected againſt him; as that he had enter'd into a Confederacy againſt the Crown and Life of *Saul*; and in purſuance of that Deſign, was a Favourer and Supporter of *Wicked* and *Bloody Men*; (the Thoughts of which he utterly deteſted, and declar'd, That he hated them with a perfect Hatred) yet we cannot conceive, but that when *David* vindicated himſelf from thoſe *particular Accuſations*, he likewiſe at the ſame time appeal'd to God for the *General Integrity* of his Heart; for ſo the Acknowledgment of the *Omniſcience* of God did require him to do, who was acquainted with *all* the Deſigns of his Heart; and if he had indulg'd himſelf in any *Evil* way whatever, he could not expect any Protection and Aſſiſtance from God.

The *particular Crimes* therefore which were objected againſt him, were the *Occaſion* of his appealing to God for the *General*

ral Integrity of his Heart, as far as his own Search and Examination could reach: and if God by his ſeverer Scrutiny, by any further Trial of Afflictions, ſhould diſcover to him any *Deceitfulneſs* of his Heart, or any way of Wickedneſs which he himſelf had not yet obſerved, he was ready to forſake it upon Conviction, and to be lead in the Upright Path, the way *Everlaſting.*

Search me, O God, and know my Heart; Try me, and know my Thoughts; And ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlaſting.

Which Words may afford us theſe *Three* Conſiderations,

I. What is that *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of Heart, which God indiſpenſably requires from all of us. *See if there be any wicked way in me.*

II. How we may beſt judge of this *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of our Hearts, *viz.* by ſearching and examining our own Conſciences; and eſpecially by being willing to *appeal* to God's *Omniſcience* in that Matter: *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; Try me, and know my Thoughts.*

III. That it is only this *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of the Heart which can entitle us to the Protection and favourable Aſſiſtance of God. *Lead me in the way Everlaſting.*

1. What is that *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of Heart indiſpenſably required from all of us. *See if there be any wicked way in me.*

Now according to the *Pſalmiſt*'s own Expreſſion in another place, God *requires Truth in the inward Parts*; That the real Intention of our Minds ſhould be to pleaſe him in all things, or that our Obedience ſhould

ſhould be perform'd upon a *True Principle*, the *Authority of God*, or a *Conformity* to his *Will*, which is that we mean by *Sincerity*.

There are many *Ends* which Men may propoſe to themſelves in the ſame Action or Undertaking; but that which makes an Action Religious, is the performing of it with a principle regard to God, and to His Commands.

A Man may be *ſober* and *temperate*, becauſe it is agreeable to his Conſtitution, and conducing to his Health; becauſe he would preſerve a fair Reputation in the World; or to keep himſelf in ſuch a State of Mind and Body, as may give him the trueſt *Reliſh* of ſenſual Pleaſures, and a long Enjoyment of Temporal Eaſe and Happineſs: Upon ſuch *Principles* as theſe, the more *Refined Epicureans* may be very *temperate* and ſober Perſons, and look like men of great *Moderation* in the Eyes of the World, and yet be *high Senſualiſts* ſtill.

But whoſoever governs his Appetites upon a true Principle of *Religion*, does it upon the account of the *Laws* of *God*, and in imitation of the *Example* of *Chriſt*; that by withdrawing himſelf from the Pleaſures of this World, his Heart may be more fix'd upon *Spiritual* and *Heavenly* Enjoyments; and that he may live in a Preparation to part with all his preſent Satisfactions, when the Providence of God ſhall lay the *Croſs* upon him, or when *Death* ſhall ſummon him to depart out of this World.

All the *outward* things in Religion are capable of being *Diſſembled*, or at leaſt, of being acted upon *Low*, and *unworthy Deſigns*: Men may give Alms out of a Principle of Vain-glory; make long Prayers, as a Preface to Injuſtice; *Faſt* and *Mortifie* only to appear Devout; receive the Sacrament in compliance only with Cuſtom, and the expectation of Neighbours; They may Read the Bible out of

of Curioſity, or in order to make Objections againſt it, or only to fill their Memories with its Phraſes, without conſidering the Wiſdom and Holineſs of thoſe Writings, or without making them a Rule of Faith, and a Law of Life: And many may come to Church only to make their *beſt Appearance*, and to be *Diverted*, rather than Edified by a Sermon; whereas the only ſolid and laſting Principle of *theſe* and ſuch like Duties, is a Senſe of our Obligation to God, a complying with his *Authority* and *Will*; a Deſign of promoting his Glory, by our hearty and ready Obedience, and of ſaving our Souls in the Day of the Lord.

There are ſome *ſecular Conſiderations*, which may come in as *Under-Motives* to our Duty; becauſe God has been pleas'd to make uſe of *them* to invite us to Vertue and Holineſs: ſuch as a good Name, or fair Reputation in the World; Health and Plenty, and Length of Days; which are repreſented in the Book of *Proverbs*,

as

as the Noble Retinue, and the Lovely Attendants of true Wiſdom and Piety; ſuch as ſerve to make her Amiable and Glorious in the Eyes of all People; and therefore muſt be allowed to have ſome attracting Force in them, and to be *inducements* to a good Life; but then we muſt take care that they be *ſo* in a *ſubordinate* manner, that they be not the *chief* and *principle* Things for which we are willing to ſerve God: for theſe *outward Advantages* are but *Accidental*, or the uſual Bleſſings of an *ordinary Providence*; they are not the *certain Fruits* of Righteouſneſs, or its *Eſſential* Reward: Perſecutions, Afflictions, and a calamitous State of Affairs, may hinder us of thoſe *Ornaments* of Vertue, and ſpoil us of *thoſe Motives* to Religion; but nothing can break our good Purpoſes, when they are Bottom'd upon the true Principle, the *Authority* and *Will* of God.

In quiet Times, and when the Age is in good Temper, Religion may be very *profita-*

profitable even towards the bettering of our Circumſtances in *this* World; *it* may bring us to great Honour, and place us in the Favour and Eſteem of moſt People: *It* may be attended by Riches and Plenty, and the faireſt Accommodations of this Life; and all the while, none of theſe *ſplendid* things may in the leaſt abate of the *ſincerity* of our Hearts; becauſe we are reſolv'd to continue in the *ſame deſign* of ſerving God, tho' he ſhould take away the *Hedge* that is about us: And tho' his Providence ſhould deliver us over to bitter Trials, yet with Holy *Job*, we would hold faſt our Integrity.

Vertue is always Virtue, and Duty is ever Duty to the *ſincere Chriſtian*; his outward Condition or his Fortune may alter, but his Heart and his good Intentions are ſtill the ſame: His Eye is upon God and his Laws, upon his Immutable Nature and Holineſs; *That* is, his Compaſs to Saile by in the Voyage of Life; and let it be never ſo Dark and Cloudy, he ſtill Steers on:

on: All other *Motives* may vary and change, but the Fear and Love of God is our *ſure Direction*, and will eſtabliſh us in the right way.

As *Sincerity* has reſpect to the *Principle* upon which we are to act, ſo the *Integrity* of the Heart has reſpect to *all* the Commandments of God; it will not conſiſt with a *Partial* Obedience, it will not allow of any *one* Sin, tho' mens Conſtitutions and Natures, their Buſineſs and Imployments, the Examples of the Age, and the Vitious Cuſtoms of the World, plead ever ſo hard for the retaining of that *one* Sin: for the allowance of any *one* Sin, which we know to be ſuch, is a direct Violation of the *Authority* of God, and is inconſiſtent with a State of Pardon and Grace.

If we be contented that there remain any *way* of *Wickedneſs* in us, we have not yet truly Repented, neither can we expect that our Prayers ſhould be heard; *for if we*

we regard Iniquity in our Hearts, the Lord will not hear us.

What the *Pſalmiſt* here calls *any Wicked way*, we may underſtand either of a *habit* and courſe of Sin, or of any *Indulgence* to any one beloved Luſt; or of any ſecret *Deſign* and Purpoſe of committing any Evil whatever: If there be any thing of this Nature permitted to remain within our Souls, we have not that *Integrity* of Heart which God indiſpenſably requires to make our Repentance true, and our Religious Service acceptable to him.

But then we ſhould do well to conſider, That the *Integrity* of the Heart is to be judg'd of by the Truth and Seriouſneſs of our Reſolutions and Endeavours, both to diſcover what *ways* of Wickedneſs there are in us, and then to put them from us, and to guard our ſelves againſt them for the future by an honeſt and hearty Diligence. As to ſome Remains of Corruption, ſome Tendencies towards Evil, ſome Strivings of the Fleſh with the Spirit, ſome ſort of Infirmities and Slips, which are

not ſeperable from the ſtricteſt Life, and ſome Defects and Imperfections in our beſt Actions: Theſe are the Miſery and Burden of our Fallen Nature, theſe are Matter for the Exerciſe of a continual *Humiliation*; and notwithſtanding *theſe Infirmities*, our Hearts may be right with God, when we allow ourſelves in no *way* of Wickedneſs, in no *Courſe* of Sin, in no *Indulgence* of Appetites, in no *Deſign* of complying with any evil Thoughts, Deſires and Tendencies, but ſincerely endeavour to ſuppreſs and weaken the *Remains* of our Corruption, and *to perfect Holineſs in the fear of the Lord.*

Thus we ſee what is that *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of Heart, which God indiſpenſably requires from all of us, to qualifie us for his Pardon and Grace, and to make us true and real Chriſtians.

Sincerity requires that we ſerve God upon a *Right Principle*, without Hypocriſie, and with a due Senſe of his Authority and good Pleaſure. *Integrity* calls for our *Reſolution* and *Endeavour* to obey *all* the Command-

mandments of God, without making a Reſerve for *any* way of Wickedneſs whatever.

The 2*d* Thing I propos'd, was, how we may beſt judge of this *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of our Hearts, *viz.* by examining of our own Conſciences to that degree, as to be willing to appeal to God's *Omniſcience* in that Matter: *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; Try me, and know my Thoughts.*

The Examining and Searching of our own Hearts is a neceſſary and a difficult Duty; all pretend to it, but there are few, I fear, who perform it thoroughly.

Moſt People will allow it to be a requiſite Forerunner to the Receiving of the Bleſſed Sacrament, and before the Solemn Feſtivals they will generally ſet aſide ſome time to conſider of their ways and Lives: But do they find it an eaſie matter to deſcend into themſelves, and to ſearch to the bottom of their Souls? Is there not a natural Averſeneſs in Man to behold his *own Deformity*, or at leaſt to acknowledge it to be ſuch?

Can a Man be eaſily brought to ſearch and probe his *own Wounds?* Will not he preſently draw back his Hand, and think he has done enough, before he has gone half way, or before he has reach'd to the Bottom and Core of his Diſeaſe?

When men knock at the Door of their own Hearts, are not Self-love, and Pride, and Security ready to ſtep out, and to tell them all is well? If they be ſo reſolute as to make a further Entrance, they diſcover perhaps a great many Sins; but they are ſo Painted and Varniſhed over by Pretences and Excuſes taken from the Cuſtoms and Examples of the World, that they hardly know how to condemn themſelves for entertaining ſuch modiſh and faſhionable Gueſts. If they chance to be ſomewhat more inquiſitive, and to open another Scene in their Hearts, they find perhaps a multitude of ſtrong and confirmed Habits of Sin, which have dwelt there a long time, and now plead Poſſeſſion: They think it almoſt impoſſible to get out theſe ſetled and rooted Inhabitants; and now they

they are come to ſuch Strength, to ſuch a twiſted and multiply'd Intereſt, they think they had better be let alone, than diſturb'd to no purpoſe. If they ſtill go on to make a deeper Search, behold there appears a *Fountain* of *Evil* continually bubling up into impure Deſires, ſenſual Luſts, worldly Deſigns, and vile Imaginations! then they preſently conclude, That this is that which men call *Original Sin*, the bed of Corruption, the brackiſh Fountain of Impure Streams, which Poiſons all our Nature: And as to this they think it ſufficient to acknowledge, that there is ſuch a *Noiſome Dungeon* in every Man's Heart, as well as in theirs, that there is no Obligation to cleanſe it, but to lament and bewayle themſelves for it, is enough.

Thus we ſee, how ſome who undertake a ſelf-examination, may be lead through all the Apartments of Sin and Wickedneſs without much concern; and be impos'd upon by a train of cheats and deluſions, and think there is little for them to correct and amend, becauſe they have not yet diſcover'd the

the great cheat of all, the *Deceitfulneſs* of their own Hearts: For if they had found out that, and been well aware of it, they would ſoon have confeſs'd, that no faſhionable Cuſtoms of the World, no Growth, no ſtrength of Habits, could be any excuſe for *Wilful Sin*; and that *Original Corruption* was no ſuch Torrent of Evil, but that it might be weakned and diverted; and that they were mens actual and voluntary Sins which fed and heightned that Fountain, and made it ſo often over-flow; that Repentance, and Prayer, and Watchfulneſs, and a conſtancy in good Duties, might eaſily keep it within its Bounds, and reduce it to that low State, that tho' it might ſometimes make attempts againſt a Life of Vertue, yet it ſhould ſeldom prevail in ſuch Inſtances as could be interpreted to interrupt a Courſe of Goodneſs.

But now if People would examin their Hearts to ſome purpoſe, they muſt allow themſelves a conſiderable time to do it in, eſpecially thoſe who have not accuſtom'd themſelves to this Duty already; they muſt

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ſet about it with much thoughtfulneſs and concern; they muſt make themſelves very ſenſible of the horrid Nature of Sin, and that there is no eſcaping the Wrath of God, if they wilfully retain Iniquity in their Hearts: they muſt be very careful that they be not impos'd upon in this ſo neceſſary a Work, by the Wiles of Satan, by the prevailing Vitiouſneſs of the Age, by the Treachery and Deceitfulneſs of their own Hearts: They muſt recal as many *particular Tranſgreſſions* as they can, and work into their Minds a more earneſt and ready Watchfulneſs againſt thoſe Sins, which their Conſtitutions, and their Callings, and their way of Life, and their frequent Falls have made them moſt liable to: They muſt compare their Actions with the Rule of God's Word, with the Vows and Engagements they have already made with the ſtrictneſs of that profeſſion they are under, and with the Spiritual Nature of thoſe Rewards they are preparing themſelves to receive.

And if they would be further ſatisfy'd of

of the *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of their Hearts, they cannot refuſe the Appealing to God's *Omniſcience*, that they are ſerious and hearty in what they are doing, that they really deſign to get a full Knowledge of themſelves, that they are not willing to conceal or cover any *one* Sin; but that having made ſuch Diſcovery of their Hearts as they are well able to attain to, they are willing and deſirous that God would try them further, by that *Word of his which is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two edged ſword, that is able to divide aſunder the Soul and Spirit, the Joynts and Marrow, and is a clear diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*: That if it may be for their further good, God would melt them down in the Furnace of Afflictions, and then make them ſenſible what Droſs there was adhering to them, what mixture of Impurity, which nothing but that *Fire* could have reveal'd.

Theſe are Trials which cannot be propos'd and deſir'd, but by an Honeſt Heart; which muſt needs give us a teſtimony and Com-

Comfortable aſſurance that we are *Sincere*, and that it is our full purpoſe to ſerve God all our days, and in all the Circumſtances of our Lives with clear *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of Heart; eſpecially, if we give our ſelves ſome leaſure to conſider what we do when we make this *Solemn Appeal* to God; and with *David* in this Pſalm, imploy our Minds for ſome time on the *Spiritual Nature* and *Omniſcience* of God, before we deſire to be Try'd, and Prov'd, and Examin'd by it.

He confeſſes that it was God that made him, and that ſaw his Subſtance before it was faſhion'd into the curious fabrick of an Humane Body: That 'twas his ſecret power that fram'd the wonderful ſtructure that fitted all the innumerable parts with due proportion and Contexture, and made it a ſuitable Habitation for an Immortal Soul. He confeſſes how the ſame Spirit and power is preſent to all the thoughts of his Heart, that there are no foldings, no dark receſſes, that can conceal any thing from him, that all the branchings of his Soul, the imaginations of his Heart, the compaſs of his converſation are regiſter'd in his Book, no night, no retirement that can

ſhut out God; no hiding from his Spirit, thô he ſhould travel into the remoteſt Countries, or remain in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; nay thô he ſhould go down into *Hades*, and make his abode in the Regions of departed Souls, even there his Power and his Hand would find him out.

And when he had with ſuch deliberation and exactneſs conſider'd and acknowledg'd the *Omniſcience* of God, and view'd it in ſeveral Lights, and imprinted it on his Mind by variety of Expreſſions; then he offers his whole Heart to be taken in pieces as an *Anatomy* before God; then he offers all his Reſolutions and Deſigns to be examined by that Spirit that ſearches all things.

And truly, whoever ſhall refuſe to undergo this Trial, has reaſon to doubt that there is ſome *Hypocriſie* remaining in him, ſome falſneſs of Heart, ſome allowance of Sin, ſome way of Wickedneſs, that he cannot yet bring himſelf to part with.

We muſt not think that 'tis the priviledge only of ſome *few Saints* to appeal to God in ſuch a Caſe as this; no Man can ſay his Prayers without doing that which amounts to the ſame thing,

thing; he cannot ask forgiveneſs of God without a penitent Heart, and no one can be ſaid to repent without a ſincere endeavour to avoid all Sin for the future, of which Reſolution he knows that God is the Judge.

The *Integrity* of the Heart does not oblige any one to ſay that he has never ſinned, or that he has no Inclinations to Evil, or that he has already obtain'd a Victory over all his ſenſual and worldly Deſires, or that he can promiſe to himſelf never to fall into Sin again: theſe are not the things that are neceſſarily requir'd to make good the *Integrity* of the Heart; but if we have ſeriouſly conſidered our ways, and do utterly abhor every thing that is Evil; if our good Reſolutions are fixed, and our Prayers are wholly bent toward the pleaſing of God in newneſs of Life, then are we ſuch true Penitents, and ſuch ſincere Chriſtians as God will approve of, even when he himſelf has ſearched our Hearts, and known our Thoughts; then are we ſuch as he will carry on to greater perfection, as he will lead in the way *Everlaſting*. Which is the

3*d*. and Laſt thing to be conſidered, *viz*. That 'tis only this *Sincerity* and *Integrity* of

the Heart that can entitle us to the favourable aſſiſtance of God, whereby he will *lead us in the way Everlaſting.*

Where there is not an honeſt Heart there can be expected no fruit of righteouſneſs: *Sincerity* is the only Soil wherein the word of God can be truly planted, and where the Graces of the Goſpel can ſpring and flouriſh.

When we ſee men lead *unprofitable* Lives under the influence of good Inſtruction, under the outward Obſervances of Religion, and under all the real Advantages of being very eminently vertuous, if they were not wanting to themſelves; then we may be ſure that they are not *ſound* at Heart, that all their Religious Actions are blaſted by *ſome ſecret Hypocriſie*, and that they cannot proſper in Holineſs by reaſon of ſome *reſerved Sin.* There is ſome gainful Injuſtice that they will not yet lay aſide, there are ſome frauds and cheats that they will not yet ſeperate from their Imployments and Callings; there is ſome lurking Revenge which they have not yet accompliſhed, ſome Malice which they deſire to execute, or ſome Senſuality which they know not how to renounce, and if there be any of

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theſe ways of Wickedneſs in many profeſſed Chriſtians, no wonder that they do not thrive in Piety, and that their Souls grow thin and meagre under the beſt Proviſions in Religion, and the greateſt Plenty of the Goſpel: There is ſome accurſed thing, ſome ſecret conſciouſneſs of an unrepented Guilt that ſpoils thoſe Duties, which they cannot wholly neglect, and yet from which they receive but little benefit: whilſt their Souls are in ſuch a wretched condition, divided between God and the World, they do every thing *deceitfully* and with a double Heart; inſtead of repenting they only prevaricate with God; inſtead of confeſſing their Sins, they try to palliate them; when they ſhould ſearch their Corruptions they only cover it; and when they ſhould heal their wounded Souls, they only skin them over.

That which we read in the Text, *if there be any wicked way in me*, the Margint of our Bibles has it, if there be any way of *Pain* or *Grief* in me; and it is moſt certain, that where there is not an *Integrity* of Heart, there men will find no *comfort* in Religion; the Ways and Commandments of God are always grievous to ſuch, they walk in the Paths of Duty with

with a Leg that was broken and is not well ſet, but has ſtill ſome Splinters in it that put them to continual Pain. They come to God with a trembling and aking Heart, and can have no Confidence, no filial Truſt and Relyance when they appear before him, there is ſome root of *bitterneſs* within that ſpoils the reliſh of all their Religious Duties. They pray, but without Faith and Devotion; they do many things in Religion, but without a true Principle of Obedience; they ſometimes receive the Sacrament, but 'tis with horror, rather then gladneſs of Soul, with fear of eating and drinking their own *Damnation*, rather then with raiſed Affections and a Spiritual Appetite. Believe it, there is no Strength, no Proficiency, no Comfort to be found in Religion, unleſs you can bring your Hearts to renounce all ungodlineſs, and every *wicked way:* Unleſs you cleanſe your ſelves from all Maliciouſneſs, Injuſtice, Hatred and Contentions, Senſuality and Pride, from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit.

But if upon a ſerious Examination we find our ſelves to be ſincere, and that we are willing to pleaſe God in all things, according to our

our Underſtandings, and according to our Power; then we may promiſe to our ſelves a gracious Acceptance of our honeſt and diligent Endeavours, a protection and guidance of our Perſons in our lawful Callings and Imployments, and a favourable conſtruction of our unvoluntary Slips and Infirmities: Then God and his Holy Angels will be ready to aſſiſt us, to preſerve us from Dangers, to arm us againſt Temptations, to lead us in Truth and Righteouſneſs, in Piety and Vertue; which is the ſure, the certain, the *everlaſting way.*

Where there is no deſign or purpoſe of Wickedneſs, there the Heart is *prepared* for God to write all his *Laws* upon it, and as it increaſes in purity, it will be capable of receiving his Laws in a deeper Impreſſion and a fairer Character. *Sincerity* in the loweſt degree is the *true Image* of God on the Soul thô drawn but in weak Colours; a proficiency in Holineſs will add a further perfection to it, and quickly give it a ſtronger Life: The honeſt Mind receives *new Illumination* from the *Spirit* that ſearches it, and the Thoughts of that Conſcience muſt needs be more awful, where God has been more eminently *preſent.*

Good-

Goodneſs, and Power, and Wiſdom, and Mercy, delight to encamp about all thoſe who are fully reſolved to ſerve God in the *Integrity* of their Hearts, they have a diſpoſition that fits them to receive the Influences of the Spirit, whereby they ſhall be mightily ſtrengthened in the inner Man: they have a worthineſs to be admitted to the higheſt Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, to the neareſt Communion with God in Holy Duties, where they ſhall find their good Reſolutions confirmed, their pious Purpoſes encouraged, their honeſt Affections rais'd, and their *Sincerity* advanc'd into further degrees of *Eſtabliſhed Virtue*, and whilſt they keep on in the plain Path of Duty, and an upright Converſation, they ſhall be ſafely *conducted* thrô this Wilderneſs of Temptation and Miſery, to the Bleſſed Manſions of Everlaſting Peace and Glory.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, Praiſe and Thanksgiving, now and for Ever more.

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